

Message Text

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46

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 EB-07 COME-00 L-02

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 RSC-01 PRS-01 /060 W

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R 311125Z JAN 75

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1594

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

ZNE/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 1001

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 99

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OVIP (ROCKEFELLER, DAVID), IZ, US

SUBJECT: DAVID ROCKEFELLER VISIT TO BAGHDAD

REF: BAGHDAD 88

1. SUMMARY: DURING ONE DAY VISIT TO IRAQ DAVID ROCKEFELLER BECAME FIRST PROMINENT AMERICAN TO HAVE LONG SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION WITH SADDAM HUSSEIN. DESPITE WIDESPREAD SPECULATION WITHIN DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY TO THE CONTRARY, VISIT PRODUCED NO BREAKTHROUGH IN U.S. - IRAQI RELATIONS. IT WAS NEVERTHELESS HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT VISIT AND CONFIRMED THIS REGIME'S INTENTION TO KEEP ITS U.S. OPTION OPEN. END SUMMARY.

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2. ROCKEFELLER PARTY OF THREE (REED AND RICHARDSON) ARRIVED

AFTERNOON OF JANUARY 28 AND WAS MET BY OFFICIAL HOST ADNAN AT-TAYAR, PRESIDENT OF RAFIDAIN BANK AND IRAQ'S NUMBER TWO BANKER. (GOVERNOR OF CENTRAL BANK AL-QAISI WAS ABROAD.) ROCKEFELLER GIVEN TOP VIP TREATMENT AND PUT UP AT RASHID GUEST PALACE. FIRST MEETING WAS WITH MINISTER FOREIGN AFFAIRS SAADOUN HAMMADI WHO, TO SURPRISE AND DISMAY OF GROUP, WAS VERY COOL, SPOUTED ONLY BAATH RHETORIC, AND DOUBTED IF SHORT TIME WOULD PERMIT CALLS ON ANY OTHER OFFICIALS. GROUP THEN SPENT HOUR AT MY RESIDENCE FOR BRIEFING PRIOR TO 8:30 DINNER HOSTED BY AT-TAYAR.

3. JUST AS WE WERE DEPARTING FOR DINNER (WHICH WAS ONLY FUNCTION I ATTENDED), CALL CAME FROM MFA THAT RCC VICE CHAIRMAN SADDAM HUSSEIN WOULD RECEIVE MR. ROCKEFELLER AT 9 P.M. MEETING LASTED OVER TWO HOURS AND WAS EXTREMELY CORDIAL AND RELAXED. BESIDES TWO PRINCIPALS, ONLY MINISTER OF INFORMATION TARIQ AZIZ AND INTERPRETER WERE PRESENT. VISIT COVERED WIDE RANGE OF SUBJECTS AND SADDAM ASKED MANY QUESTIONS. MR. ROCKEFELLER HAD ONLY FEW MINUTES PRIOR TO DEPARTURE JAN 29 TO BRIEF ME ON MAIN TOPICS COVERED (REFTEL). IF DEPT DEBRIEFS HIM ON MIDEAST TRIP WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING MORE DETAILED ACCOUNT OF MEETING AND HIS IMPRESSION OF SADDAM.

4. COMMENT: FACT THAT MEETING TOOK PLACE AND WAS MADE PUBLIC IS BEST EVIDENCE TO DATE THAT THIS REGIME IS DETERMINED TO ESTABLISH NEW LINKS TO U.S., FIRST AND FOREMOST ECONOMIC ONES, AND TO KEEP OPEN OPTION FOR IMPROVEMENT OF POLITICAL RELATIONS AS AS INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL OBSTACLES ARE REDUCED SUFFICIENTLY TO PERMIT SADDAM TO MOVE WITHOUT FEAR OF CHALLENGE FROM WITHIN BAATH PARTY.

5. WHILE IMPORTANCE I ATTACH TO THIS VISIT MAY SEEM EXAGGERATED TO THOSE POSTS WHO RECEIVE PROMINENT AMERICAN DAILY, IN IRAQI CONTEXT, FOR NO. 1 IRAQI BAATH LEADER TO MEET FOR OVER TWO HOURS WITH SYMBOL PAR EXCELLENCE OF U.S. CAPITALISM IS INDEED BREATH-TAKING. AS FURTHER SIGNS OF CHANGING IRAQI SCENE, GOI SIGNED CONTRACT WITH SHERATON FOR TWO HOTELS ON JAN 28 (BAGHDAD 90) AND A CONTRACT ON JAN 31 FOR EIGHT NEW AIRCRAFT WORTH 220 MILLION DOLLARS, THE LARGEST SINGLE CONTRACT BOEING HAS EVER SIGNED IN MIDDLE EAST (SEPTTEL).

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